



## Editorial

## Salute to Simulation Pioneer Dr. Stephen Abrahamson



The most poignant moment at the recent International Meeting of the Society for Simulation in Healthcare occurred in the opening session when Dr. David Gaba interviewed Dr. Stephen Abrahamson, the developer of the first computer-controlled manikin simulator. This taped interview beautifully shared the excitement of the development of SimOne, the grandfather of today's high-tech manikins. The audience sat riveted as Dr. Stephenson related his story and the push back his team received from faculty at that time...pushback to the point of sabotaging the manikin one time by cutting off one of its arms to get it through a door. One presumes it was the arm full of electronics. He did not relate all the stories he could have, but the pain on his face was evident. The SimOne project died shortly thereafter, successfully short circuited (no pun intended) by fellow faculty members.

I was stunned and teary eyed listening to this man. It became evident after the session that others in the audience were also teary eyed. It was quite an unexpected and emotional opening to a conference; one many of us will never forget.

Perhaps, the emotions evoked were so strong for many of us because some of us still work in organizations as the lone simulation champion. Many simulationists are still being denigrated, ignored, second guessed, insert your push back term here, in our roles as educators using and modeling, learner-centered experiential learning. It is not a task for the faint of heart, and we carry on. It remains

unclear to me why one faculty member sees simulation and immediately grasps the possibilities and ramifications and is delighted and another sees it and starts immediately nay-saying.

Dr. Abrahamson lived to see his dream for simulation become mainstream. His dream did not die even when his fellow faculty succeeded in squelching a budding and revolutionary simulation program. Others picked up and later continued his work. Dr. Abrahamson was unable to travel to the conference, thus his son received the "Pioneer in Healthcare Simulation" award for him. After accepting the award on behalf of his father, his son held up his father's license plate "Sim 1," the license plate on his father's car for 50 years. We are doing noble and difficult work, turning the academic battleship to move it forward. Change is incremental but slowly picking up speed, as a perfect storm of political and economic change makes society and even nurse educators question the way things have always been. Thank you Dr. Abrahamson; we will carry on your work.

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